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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/537,760	06/06/2005	Fufang Zha	2002P87059WOUS	5173

28524 7590 01/13/2009
SIEMENS CORPORATION
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY DEPARTMENT
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EXAMINER

MENON, KRISHNAN S

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

1797

MAIL DATE DELIVERY MODE

01/13/2009

PAPER

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

DETAILED ACTION

Claims 1-53 are pending; claims 23-34, 36-39 and 49-53 are withdrawn from consideration. Claims 1, 12, 35, 40 and 41 are independent among the elected claims.

Applicant had elected the species represented by figure 2 (presented below) for prosecution in response to the restriction requirement.

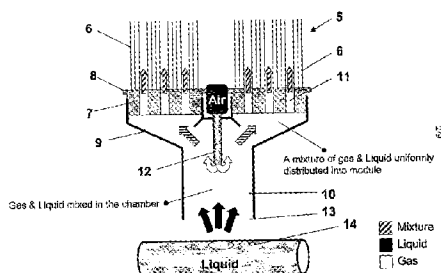


Figure 2.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

1. Claims 1- 6, 8-17, 19-22, 35 and 40-42 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Heine et al (US 6,126,819).

Hein teaches the membrane module as claimed – see the annotated figure 7 presented below. Heine teaches feeding a mixture of gas and liquid into the header chamber. The header chamber is an open-ended mixing chamber for gas and liquid – both gas and liquid are fed into the header chamber. See paragraphs at column 5, line 56, and column 9, line 12, for air inlets.

Fig. 7

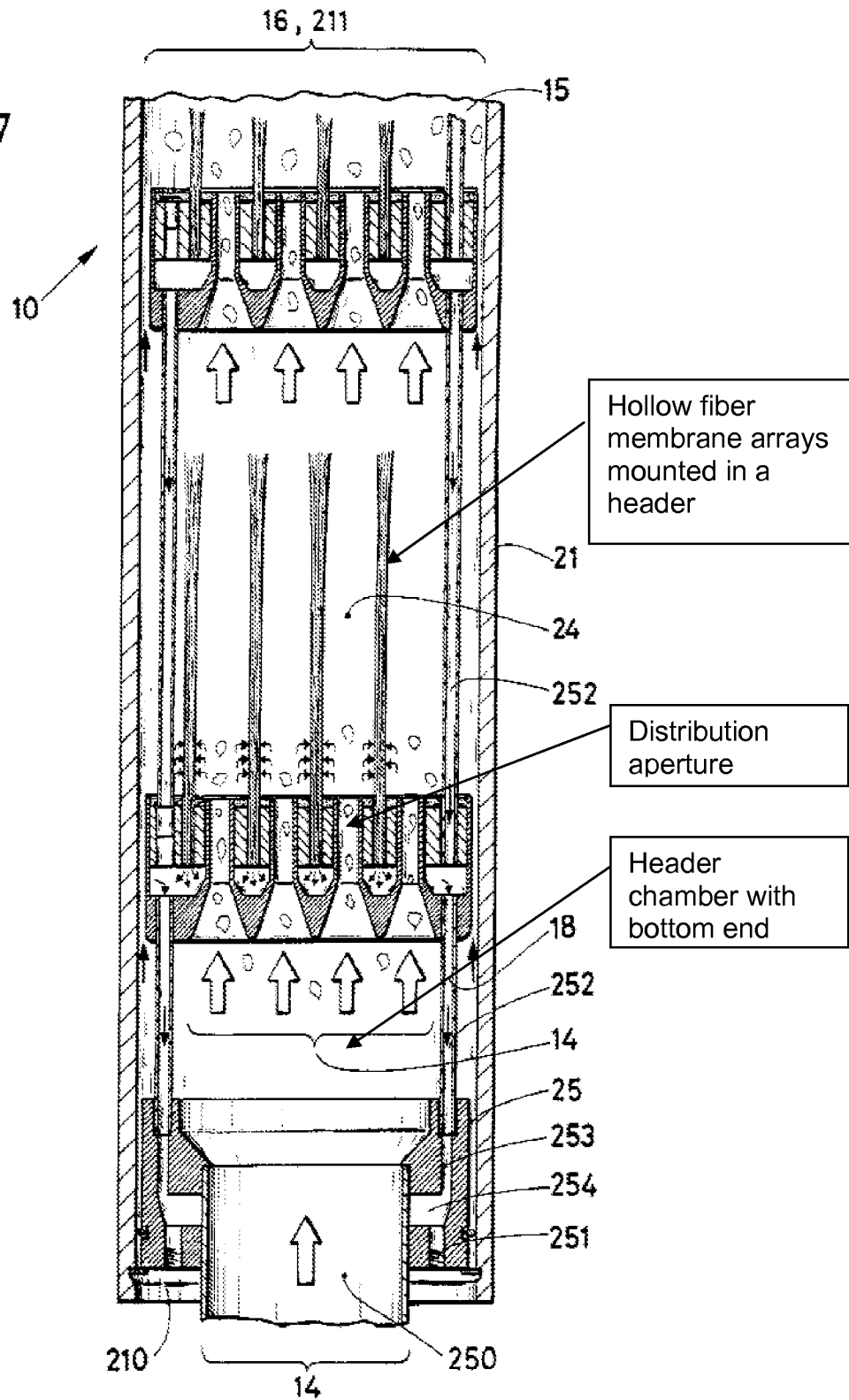
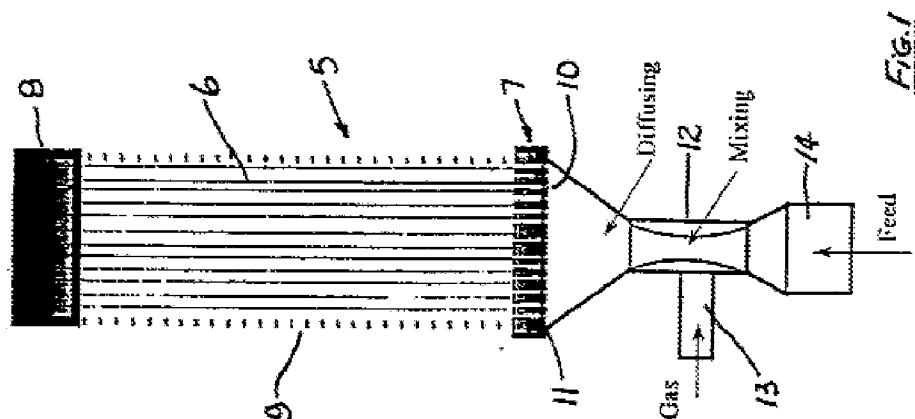


Figure 7 also shows multiple headers arranged linearly as one above the other.

2. Claims 1- 22, 35, 40-48 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Zha et al (US 2001/0047962).

Zha teaches the membrane module as claimed – see the figures, particularly, figures 1, 2 and 9. the opening sizes in the tube potting heads are in the range as claimed (paragraph 0020). Deflector for the gas – see the jet assembly 57 described in paragraph 0061. Packing density as claimed – paragraph 0019. The open-ended mixing chamber as claimed –s identified in the figure below.



Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

3. Claims 1- 22, 35, 40-48 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Zha and/or Heine as applied above, and further in view of Henshaw (US 5,783,083).

Some of the claims in the above list differ from the teaching of Heine and/or Zha in having plural modules arranged in differently manifolds. Henshaw teaches plurality of

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submerged membrane modules arranged in manifolds to have enlarged capacity treatment systems. It would be obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of invention to use the teaching of Henshaw in the teaching of Hein or Zha for the purpose of having larger treatment systems/reactors as taught by Henshaw.

Double Patenting

The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. A nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting rejection is appropriate where the conflicting claims are not identical, but at least one examined application claim is not patentably distinct from the reference claim(s) because the examined application claim is either anticipated by, or would have been obvious over, the reference claim(s). See, e.g., *In re Berg*, 140 F.3d 1428, 46 USPQ2d 1226 (Fed. Cir. 1998); *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) or 1.321(d) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent either is shown to be commonly owned with this application, or claims an invention made as a result of activities undertaken within the scope of a joint research agreement.

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

Claims 1- 22, 35, 40-48 are provisionally rejected on the ground of nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over the pending claims of copending Application No. 11/025,418. Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because the claims of the '418 application recite the limitations of the instant claims.

This is a provisional obviousness-type double patenting rejection because the conflicting claims have not in fact been patented.

Response to Arguments

Applicant's arguments filed 12/30/08 have been fully considered but they are not persuasive.

Regarding the ODP rejection, the rejection will be withdrawn as and when the terminal disclaimers are filed.

Regarding the Heine reference, applicant's claims do not recite any structure that would distinguish the claims from the teaching of the reference. The header chamber is capable of mixing gas and liquid; and the reference teaches providing gas inlets as shown.

Regarding the Zha reference, the ventury or jet assembly of Zha would not negate anticipation of the claimed invention as argued. The chamber marked "mixing" in Zha is an open-ended mixing chamber.

Conclusion

THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL. Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the

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shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Krishnan S. Menon whose telephone number is 571-272-1143. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:00-4:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, David R. Sample can be reached on 571-272-1376. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

/Krishnan S Menon/
Primary Examiner, Art Unit 1797